



## quotes sheet

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### THE MEANING OF OLYMPIC SPIRIT

Since the birth of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, the euphoria associated with the phrase “Olympic Spirit” has become universally accepted and acknowledged but rarely defined. To illustrate the essence and meaning of “Olympic Spirit”, DHL has asked U.S. Olympians, Paralympians and a world-renowned Olympic Games historian to describe in a few words, what “Olympic Spirit” means to them:

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“There is a spirit that dwells inside all of us that governs our thoughts, our emotions, our desires, our motives, our faith and our fears. These define who we are. The Olympic Spirit captures everyday people who have faced great adversity and have overcome tremendous odds to reach their greatest physical challenge. The award is given to a person that not only captures the hearts of millions across the world, but whose participation inspires us to greatness, encourages us to chase our dreams, challenges us to new heights, and confirms our theory that within everyone there is spirit that makes anything possible.”

-- **Vonetta Flowers**, 2002 Olympic Gold Medalist (Bobsleigh), U.S. Olympic Spirit Award Winner and USA Team of the Year, member of Team DHL

“When I walked into the Opening Ceremony for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games and sat with the other countries I was amazed. Team USA was the last to enter the stadium, and after we sat down I turned around and noticed the Italian team was behind us. I was thinking, ‘We are from completely different countries, but we are here for one goal. One dream.’ To me, that moment represented Olympic Spirit.”

-- **Allison Baver**, 2002 U.S. Olympian and 2006 U.S. Olympic Team Hopeful

“To me, Olympic Spirit means sportsmanship, citizenship, fairplay and leadership. Olympic Spirit is not about personal accomplishment. It is the accomplishments for others that embody Olympic Spirit.”

-- **Willie Banks**, Two-Time U.S. Track & Field Olympian (1984, '88), President, U.S. Olympic Alumni Association

“The Olympic Spirit is not easily defined. It is unique to anyone who participates in any Olympic Games in any capacity. It shows itself through the stories and performances of every Olympic Athlete. It becomes obvious when you witness athletes overcoming personal tragedy, injury, or giving their best effort on the ‘biggest global stage.’ All of us, all over the world set aside our differences for the duration of the Games. We are all inspired to improve our own lives and care for each other more by embracing these stories and great athletic achievements. So where does the Olympic Spirit exist? Everywhere. In everyone. The Olympic Games just lets us feel it, celebrate it, and see it much more clearly.”

-- **Scott Hamilton**, 1984 Olympic Gold Medalist (Figure Skating) and U.S. Olympic Spirit Award Winner; Four Time World and US Champion; member of Team DHL

“Olympic Spirit is contagious, inclusive and appreciative. It is a spirit of camaraderie and a message that despite the odds, all things are possible. The Spirit of Olympism is the spirit of hope for everyone, whether they participate in the Games or use the principles of overcoming adversity to excel in life.”

-- **Cathy Marino Bradford**, Two-Time U.S. Canoe & Kayak Olympian (1988, '92)



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“To me, the Olympic Spirit has always meant something special. It's about athletes dedicating their lives to excellence, sportsmanship, and the ideals that the Olympic Games represent. It's about persevering against long odds, about ordinary people achieving extraordinary things. And most of all, it's about bringing the world together on a peaceful stage, striving to be the best you can be, and representing your country with pride.”

-- **Dan Jansen**, 1994 Olympic Gold Medalist (Speed Skating); 1994/1998 U.S. Olympic Spirit Award Winner; Member of Four U.S. Olympic Teams; member of Team DHL

“For me Olympic Spirit is about living and competing with integrity, honor and courage -- never giving up in pursuit of a dream, and holding your head high no matter the outcome. It's giving your very best and not looking back. It also means going the extra mile to lend a helping hand, and inspire others throughout the journey.”

-- **Chris Klug**, 2002 Olympic Bronze Medalist (Snowboarding) and U.S. Olympic Spirit Award Winner; member of Team DHL

“To me Olympic Spirit is the result of the collection of some of the world's most diverse and athletically talented human beings. Then, in an environment that allows for fierce yet friendly competition, the Olympic Games becomes a symbol for world peace and harmony.”

-- **Dr. Gary W. Hall**, Three-Time U.S. Swimming Olympian (1968, '72, '76) and Three-Time Medalist (1968, silver; 1972, silver; 1976, bronze)

“The Spirit of the Paralympic Games helps us see past our differences and lets us come together in the name of humanity. The Paralympic Spirit enables us to showcase our physical differences and abilities with dignity and pride, which encourages us to see the possibilities not only within ourselves, but also in others. An athlete's journey towards perfection is often times paved with mud, blood, sweat and tears, and yet these obstacles become the very stepping stones that help us rise to the occasion. The Paralympic Spirit helps us recognize and remember those who helped us realize our potential.”

-- **Sarah Will**, 2002 Paralympic Gold Medal Sweep (4) (Alpine Skiing) and U.S. Paralympic Spirit Award Winner; member of Team DHL

“The Olympic Spirit is a united feeling that transcends boundaries created by oceans, religions, languages, ideologies and cultures. It unites the people of the world as no other entity ever has.”

-- **Micki King**, Two-Time U.S. Diving Olympian (1968, '72) and 1972 Olympic Gold Medalist

“On the final day of the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, I was sitting in the press room at the Coliseum when I heard an odd noise, like the rushing of water. I wandered through the underground hallways and came upon a scene that epitomized, to me, the Olympic Spirit. The athletes of the world were arriving through a tunnel to prepare for the Closing Ceremony. As each walked in, they passed through two lines of young volunteers. The first volunteer was asking each athlete his country. Then she would call out the name of the country. As the athlete continued, the volunteers cheered him or her and reached out to shake their hand, saying, “Thank you for coming. Be safe on your way home.” I will never forget the smiles on the faces of the athletes. This was truly the Olympic Spirit.”

-- **David Wallechinsky**, United States Olympic Historian